

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 SIL-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 L-02 NSC-05

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FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9409

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AEMBASSY COPENHAGEN 2630

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION OECD PARIS

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 OSLO 0967

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, XG, NO

SUBJ: IRVING BROWN INVITED TO NORWAY

REFS: (A) OSLO 0962 (B) STOCKHOLM 874 (C) STATE 35371

(D) OSLO 116

SUMMARY: NORWEGIAN TRADE UNION FEDERATION (LO) PRESIDENT TOR ASPENGREN, VICE PRESIDENT ODD HOJDAHL, INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY KAARE SANDEGREN AND OTHERS IN LO'S DELEGATION O GENEVA EAST-WEST CONFERENCE WERE ALARMED AND DISTRESSED WHEN THEY LEARNED FROM OTHER EUROPEAN TRADE UNION LEADERS IN BRUSSELS, EN ROUTE TO GENEVA, THAT AFL-CIO EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVE IRVING BROWN HAD REMARKED THAT LO, ASPENGREN AND, PARTICULARLY , SKNDGREN HAD BEEN OVERLY WILLING TO
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ACCEPT SOVIET PROPOSALS FOR INSTITUTIONALIZING EAST-

WEST CONTACTS. THEY WERE MYSTIFIED AT WHERE THIS INFORMATION THEY CONSIDERED INACCURATE AND MISLEADING HAD COME FROM AND WHY BROWN WAS REPEATINT IT. ON THEIR RETURN FROM GENEVA, THE GOT LO SECRETARIAT (EXECUTIVE BOARD) APPROVAL FOR AN IMMEDIATE INVITATION TO BROWN TO CLEAR UP THIS MISUNDERSTANDING AND DEMONSTRATE TO HIM NORWAY'S FIRM STANCE AND THAT OF ITS LABOR MOVEMENT AS USNATO ALLIES. THEIR MESSAGE REACHED BROWN LATE MARCH 4, THEY UNDERSTAND HE WAS SURPRISED BUT PLEASED AND ACCEPTED. HE WILL COME TO OSLO ON MARCH 19-21. LO AND AFL-CIO POSITIONS ON EAST-WEST TRADE UNION CONTACTS ARE, OF COURSE, VERY DIFFERENT, ALTHOUGH BASIC ANTIPATHY TO COMMUNISTS IS SHARED. END SUMMARY.

1.SANDGREN SAID THAT NORWEGIAN DELEGATION LEARNED FROM OTHER EUROPEAN TRADE UNION LEADERS IN BRUSSELS, EN ROUTE TO GENEVA, THAT IRVING BROWN HAD BEEN ALLEGING THAT NORWAY'S LO, ASPENGREN AND, ESPECIALLY, SANDEGREN, HAD BEEN ADVOCATING CONCESSIONS TO RUSSIANS, IN FOUR-NATION PREPARATORY GROUP FOR EAST-WEST CONFERENCE. SANDEGREN SAID THAT ASPENGREN, HOJDAHL AND HE HAD BEEN GREATLY ALARMED AT THIS INFORMATION WHICH THEY CONSIDER INACCURATE AND MISLEADING. THEY WERE ESPECIALLY ALARMED IN VIEW OF IMPORTANCE OF SOURCE, AND PERPLEXED AT WHAT MOTIVATION OR MISUNDERSTANDING COULD HAVE LED TO IT. SANDEGREN STRESSED THAT THEY HAD ALWAYS BEEN OPEN AND FORTHRIGHT ABOUT WHAT THEY WERE DOING AND FOUND IT HARD TO BELIEVE ANY OF PARTICIPANTS IN FOUR-COUNTRY PREPARATORY COMMITTEE COULD HAVE MADE SUCH ALLEGATIONS. ELIZABETH KEFFER OF DGB HAD GIVEN ASSURANCES SHE HAD NOT AND TCU POSITION WAS AT LEAST AS OPEN TO EAST-WEST CONTACTS AS NORDIC POSITION REPRESENTED BY NORWEGIANS. SANDEGREN SAID LO WAS WORRIED THAT THIS COULD HAVE UNFORTUNATE CONSEQUENCES NOT ONLY FOR NORWAY AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION COOPERATION, BUT ULTIMATELY FOR AFL-CIO. THEY REPORTED ON THIS TO LO SECRETARIAT AT ITS MARCH 3 MEETING TO HEAR EAST-WEST CONFERENCE RESULTS, ANNOUNCING THEIR INTENTION TO GET IN TOUCH WITH IRVING BROWN

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IMMEDIATELY AND INVITE HIM TO NORWAY AS SOON AS HE COULD COME. THEY ARE INVITING HIM TO MEET AND TALK WITH LO LEADERS, LEADING TRADE UNION PRESIDENTS, AND FOREIGN AND DEFENSE MINISTRY OFFICIALS, AND, PERHAPS, TO VISIT NORTH NORWEGIAN DEFENSE BASES. LO'S LEADERSHIP WILL THUS SEEK TO CLEAR UP MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND HELP BROWN GET A BETTER APPRECIATION FOR ROLE OF NORWAY'S LABOR MOVEMENT, LABOR PARTY AND LABOR

GOVERNMENT AS STAUNCH AND DEPENDABLE ALLY OF US IN NATO. SANDEGREN FOUND IT PARTICULARLY IRONIC THAT HE WHO HAD PLAYED SUCH AN ACTIVE ROLE IN CAMPAIGNING FOR NATO AGAINST THE COMMUNISTS IN HIS YOUNGER DAYS AND WORKED FOR NATO COOPERATION IN HIS FOREIGN MINISTRY DAYS, SHOULD SOMEHOW BE SUSPECTED OF WORKING IN FAVOR OF COMMUNISTS. HE FOUND THIS EQUALLY IRONIC IN CASE OF ASPENGREN, WHO IS KNOWN AS TOUGH ANTI-COMMUNISTS IN NORWAY.

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2. SANDEGREN PHONED LABATT EVENING OF MARCH 4 TO SAY THEY HAD REACHED BROWN (PRESUMABLY THROUGH THEIR PARIS EMBASSY) AND THAT THEY UNDERSTAND THAT HE HAD BEEN SURPRISED BUT PLEASED. BROWN WILL ARRIVE LATE MARCH 19 AND REMAIN UNTIL MARCH 21.

3. COMMENT: NORWAY'SS LO AND AFL-CIO HAVE OF COURSE,

BASIC POLICY DIFFERENCES ON EAST-WEST TRADE UNION CONTACTS (REF B), WHICH LO IS ANXIOUS TO DISCUSS WITH AFL-CIO. LO AND LABOR PARTY ARE BOTH PART OF UNITED AFL-CIO LABOR MOVEMENT WHICH NO GOVERNS NORWAY AND THERE IS LITTLE OR NO SEPARATION BETWEEN TRADE UNIONS ON ONE HAND AN POLITICAL PARTY AND GOVERNMENT IN CONTRAST TO US. LIKESWEDES (REFTEL A), NORWAY'S LO LEADERSHIP HAS FOUGHT AND DEFEATED AND IS FIGHTING AND DEFEATING COMMUNISTS AND OTHER FAR-LEFT GROUPS
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IN OWN RANKS, BELEIVES IT HAS NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT THEM AND FEELS NO DANGER OF BEING LED ASTRAY. IT DOES, HOWEVER, OCCASIONALLY PREEMPT ISSUES FROM THE LEFT TO "TAKE THE WIND OUR OF THEIR SAILS" AND THAT MAY BE ONE UNADMITTED MOTIVE FOR EAST-WEST CONTACTS. NORWAY'S LO LEADERSHIP CONTENTS, EVIDENTLY SINCERELY, THAT USSR AND EAST EUROPE, NOT NORWAY, RUN RISK OF IDEOLOGICAL CONTIAMINATION WITH INCREASED EXCHANGE. ASPENGREN, SANDEGREN AND OTHERS INSIST THAT SOVIET POLITICAL MISUSE OF WAST-WEST TRADE UNION CONTACTS WOULD CAUSE NORWAY TO BREAK THEM OFF IMMEDIATELY. COLLAPSE OF EAST-WEST TRADE UNION DIALOGUE DUR TO SOVIET ABUSE WOULD PROBABLY ALSO GIVE THEM USEFUL AMMUNITION AGAINST THE LEFT DOMESTICALLY. (LO HAS, HOWEVER, JOINED SOVIET IN PROPAGANDA STATEMENTS ON CAUSES DEAR TO NORWEGIAN HEARTS, SUCH AS CHILE.)

4. IN DOMESTIC CONTEXT, ASPENGREN IS SYMBOL OF TOUGH ANTI-COMMUNISM IN TRADE UNIONS AND PRAGMATIC MIDDLE-OF - THE-ROAD POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC POLICIES IN OPPOSITION TO MORE DOCTRINAIRE SOCIALSTS IN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LABOR PARTY. INTERNATIONALLY, ASPENGREN MAY BE SOMEWHAT HAMPERED BY INABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH(THOUGH HE UNDERSTANDS SOME) AND IS EMOTIONALLY ATTRACTED TO IDEAISTIC CAUSES AND UNDERDOGS. SANDEGREN SEEMS FIT WUITE WELL INTO ASPENGREN'S ANTI-COMMUNIST, RELATIVELY CONSERVATIVE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PATTERN, IN NOTABLE CONTRAST TO HIS PREDECESSOR THORVALD SROLTENBERG. HOWEVER, SANDEGREN IS SOMEWHAT CONSTRAINED BY PATH ESTABLISHED DURING STOTTENBERG'S TIME. AND AS A CAREER DIPLOMAT, IS MORE CAUTIOUS AND CAREFUL THAN IMPLUSIVE ASPENGREN AND ADJUSTS TO NUANCES AND TRENDS IN INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY TO KEEP LO IN TUNE WITH LABOR GOVERNMENT POLICY.

5. NORWAY IS GENUINELY INTERESTED IN SUBSTANCE OF WORK ENVIRONMENT PROBLEMS, AS WELL AS ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION ACROSS FRONTIERS, AND IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION COOPERATION TO GET AT THESE AND OTHER PRACTICAL

PROBLEMS. LO IS NOT WORKING OUT NEW WORK ENVIRONMENT
LEGISLATION WITH GOVERNMENT AND EMPLOYER ASSOCIA-
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TION AND FINDS MANY OF PROBLEMS, PARTICULARLY CONTROL
TOTOXIC SUBSTANCES, DIFFICULT TO RESOLVE WITHOUT
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION.

6. EMBASSY IS PLEASED THAT BROWN WILL VISIT NORWAY AND IMPRESS
LO WITH AFL-CIO ATTITUDES, POLICIES AND EXPERIENCE IN
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS TO REINFORCE IMPRESSION MADE BY AFL-CIO
INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR MICHAEL BOGGS DURING JANUARY VISIT.
EMBASSY HOPES THIS WILL FACILITATE FURTHER AFL-CIO-
LO CONTACTS AS ENVISIONED BOGGS TALKS WITH LO
(REF D).
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